

NO. 1.

THE BANEFUL EFFECTS OF INTemperance ON THE MIND; AND,
ABSTINENCE, AS A CURE FOR IT IN THE PRESENT STATE OF
SOCIETY, SUPERIOR TO MODERATION.

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A SERMON,

PREACHED IN

THE REV. DR. WARDLAW'S CHAPEL, GLASGOW,

ON THE EVENING OF SABBATH, THE 29TH MAY, 1831.

BY THE REV. ARCHIBALD BROWNING.

TILlicOUNTRY.

1 PETER, II. 11.—*Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war
against the soul.*

WE are destined to an immortal existence. Our mental powers are capable of expansion and invigoration to a degree, in all probability far beyond what we can, at present conceive. The works and the ways of God, the development of the character of that great Being, who is infinite in resources, furnish a field of immeasurable extent for the exercise and improvement of these powers.

Communion with God, as it is the repose of all the loftiest and purest affections of our nature, is the only spring of perpetual mental improvement, and of lasting happiness. And, as it is only in Christ that God is reconciling the world to himself, and imputes not to men their trespasses, it is evident that it is only in Christ we can enjoy communion with him.

The gospel is the only medium through which we can converse with God in Christ. The gospel is a revelation of the mercy of a holy God to perishing sinners, on the foundation of the atonement and righteousness of the Son of his love. It is a body of divine truth, so imbued with a spirit of holiness, wisdom, and love, as to purify, strengthen, and render active, intelligent and happy, every mind of which it takes full possession. Its aim, its tendency, and its effect, is to assimilate man to his Maker, and, in that way to introduce him to a reverential, but friendly and pleasing intercourse with him.

When the gospel has taken a living and substantial form in the mind of a believer, it is a spirit of trust, submission, veneration, love and obedience towards God; it is a spirit of justice, integrity, truth, candour, compassion and disinterested generosity towards fellow-men; and it is a spirit of thoughtfulness, sobriety, order, industry and cheerfulness in reference to himself. In short, the spirit of the gospel is one that delights in the diffusion and establishment of truth, purity, righteousness, freedom, love and joy among men.

All those propensities, which, having their origin in our corporeal frame, and urging us unduly to gratify our animal nature, are incompatible with the spirit of the gospel, and obstruct the progress of the soul in its career of moral improvement, may, with perfect propriety, be termed fleshly lusts. The object of the following discourse is not to consider how all these lusts war against the soul, but simply to point out the pernicious tendency of one of them, namely, intemperance in drinking, and to show that abstinence from ardent spirits is a better safeguard against it than what is usually termed moderation.

I. In what manner then does intemperance in drinking intoxicating liquors war against the soul? It may be answered, it wars against the soul by destroying, in course of time, its *clearness*, its *pliancy*, its *peacefulness*, its *power of reflection*, its *purity*, and its *comprehension*.

1. In the first place, intemperance injures the *clearness* of the mind. By *clearness* I understand that quality of mind, by which it is fitted for receiving and reflecting just impressions of truth of every description, but particularly moral and spiritual truth. Let us suppose a person never to have tasted ardent spirits till he has reached the vigour of manhood, and till his mental faculties have attained their full strength and activity. Let him then take a small quantity only, and observe its effects upon him. Does it increase the clearness of his thoughts? The very reverse. He is heated by it. He feels a sort of giddiness and confusion. On subjects of any depth or difficulty, with which he is not quite familiar, he cannot for some time think to the purpose at all. Ardent spirits have had upon his mind an effect similar to what is produced on the eyes by a flash of lightning. They have for a time blinded it. This, so far as I know, is matter of uncontested experience: and if it be, we may set it down as the natural and proper effect of ardent spirits on the mind.

Why, then, it may be asked, have they not this effect in all cases? The answer to this is easy. They have not this effect in all cases, at least so apparently, because a man becomes habituated to the use of them. But is it proper to admit any thing hurtful into our constitution merely because, in course of time, the use of it may occasion less sensible derangement than it did at first? The subsequent use cannot *rectify*, but must *confirm* and *increase* the original derangement. Were mere perseverance in the use of what is at first deleterious to remove the evil effects of it, we might, with impunity, betake ourselves to the use of *poisons* of considerable strength. Even these do not, for some time, destroy the constitution, if the first doses be small, and if the quantity taken daily be cautiously and slowly increased. But who would say that the health and comfort of that poor being, who, from having a sound constitution, has recklessly reduced himself to the necessity of swallowing a hundred drops of laudanum a day, are equal to his, who, with even greater cares and labors, repairs his frame by food and sleep alone? Neither is the clearness of that man's mind, who, *habitually* or even *occasionally*, inflames his blood with intoxicating liquors, equal to his, who, with the same mental discipline and equal natural talent, never drinks any thing stronger than water. The former receives and re-

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fects the impressions of moral and religious truths, as agitated and muddy waters receive and reflect the image of the sky and of surrounding objects. The latter receives and reflects them as the image of the same objects are received and reflected by the clear surface of an unruffled lake. In the former case, all is broken, restless, and undefined; in the latter, there is a beautiful unity, calmness, and distinctness.

If habitual clearness of mind, then, be a blessing, and you will allow that it is a blessing of the first magnitude, as it is intimately connected with our improvement as intelligent and immortal beings, we ought to cultivate perfect sobriety, since, without the latter, we cannot expect to enjoy the former.

2. In the second place, intemperance injures the *pliancy* of the mind. By pliancy of mind, I understand the power of turning the attention easily and at once to any subject a person may wish to consider. This power is of great importance to us in the business of life in general, and particularly in the work of advancing our moral and intellectual improvement. We have so many things to attend to, that, if we would raise ourselves to the true dignity and enjoyment of our rational nature, we would require, if possible, not to lose a moment in urging our flagging or perverse powers. Now, whether has the sober or the intemperate man the advantage as to this power? Here, there can be no doubt. Who, that wishes to listen, with profit, to a discourse of any depth, would drug himself with intoxicating liquors before going to hear it? With such a preparation, he might go to laugh, or he might go to sleep, but he need not go to learn. It requires the whole frame to be as cool and calm as the most complete sobriety can make it, to prosecute any train of thought to a successful termination in all the most important questions connected with morality and religion. When do men learn to converse with God in meditative and discursive devotion, imbibing feelings of adoration, submission, and love, as, in the realized presence of that great Being, they contemplate the works of his hands, or the events of his providence, or explore the wonders of redemption? Is it when heated or stimulated by inebriating potions? Who so ignorant, as not to know that this would be most absurd? What christian has so little of the fear of God in him as not to feel that it would be impious? I have often heard of people taking ardent spirits to fit them for *executing* purposes, the execution of which required reckless boldness, but I never heard of any so stupid as to betake themselves to such aid, when called on to *think seriously* and *deeply* on any moral or religious subject.

It may, indeed, be objected here, that many persons of dissipated habits display often great readiness of mind. But, it may be asked, at *what* are these men ready? Is it at mastering or even apprehending any intricate or abstract truths connected with our highest and best interests? Present such to them even when they are regaling themselves, and in a state of agreeable excitement, and they are quite put out. They beg to consider of them. They will think of them afterwards. At present they have neither time, that is, ability, nor inclination to turn their thoughts to them. The readiness of such men is merely a mechanical sort of readiness in things to which they have been long accustomed. It is a readiness that may point a sarcasm, or give brilliancy to a jest, but it has no aptitude for forming or arranging serious and important thoughts. Intemperance never fails, when it has long prevailed, to fix the mind in one position. The person, who is its victim, feels at home only among one kind of thoughts, and these are quite congenial to his depraved habits. He is equally indisposed and unable to look in any other direction. What a contrast is there between such a mind and the mind of him, who, living soberly, obeys, at once and with de-

light, every call to serious and elevated meditation. If pliancy of mind, then, be a blessing, and without it, in a world whose necessary business engrosses so much thought, we cannot either reach or sustain genuine spirituality of exercise, let us endeavour to secure it by the cultivation of perfect sobriety, for we cannot enjoy the one long, without practising the other.

3. In the third place, intemperance injures the *peace* of the mind. It is rational to anticipate, that God will give nature health and peace in proportion as she is satisfied with the frugal and wholesome fare which he has provided for her. If she seeks or takes more, or of a different kind, her cravings evince her perversion, and the indulgence of them is likely to issue in disease. The smallest quantity of a potent and unnecessary stimulant may be expected to inflame, or in some way or other derange some part of the system, the stomach, the blood, the nerves, the brain. Now, there is a close connexion between the mind and the body. An inflamed brain fills the mind with vague and unpleasant, often with horrifying and maddening images and ideas. Dreams, that are often dreadful in proportion to the riotous sensuality indulged in, are a proof of this fact. The horrors of the drunkard, as they are technically called, are a proof of it. The imagination of a confirmed sensualist, as it is a sink of utter pollution, is also, if not in a state of high excitement from gratification, a scene of unmingled bitterness and pain. The intemperate live either in a sort of turbid delirium, or in dreamy depression, and may be emphatically said to be among the wicked, of whom the Bible bears record, 'that they have no peace.' This to be sure is the extreme. But every unnecessary participation in such stimulants must, in so far as it goes to generate a habit, be allowed to have a tendency to bring a man to this state. The effect is the same in kind, differing only in degree. Every person, who regularly admits into his constitution what has a tendency to intoxicate, at the same time introduces an enemy into his mind, that will, if the habit is not checked, sooner or later destroy his peace.

4. In the fourth place, intemperance injures the *power of reflection* in the mind. The temper of a person, who drinks often to excess, may be expected to be either sottishly good-natured, or haughty, fiery, and impatient: or it may be sometimes the one and sometimes the other. Intemperance darkens and infatuates the mind, and so unfits it for thinking to any good purpose: or it renders it irritable and impatient, and so produces the same effect. And since intoxicating liquors are in no degree necessary as food is, it is rational to conclude, that, notwithstanding the brilliant and impetuous rallying of ideas previously lodged in the mind, which they sometimes occasion, they can, in no degree, do any thing but cripple and perplex the powers of reflection. Hence no prudent person would employ a man, liable from habit to get himself intoxicated, to transact for him any piece of business that required much caution or calculation.

It may be said, indeed, that such men retain the power of reflection when sober, though they lose it when intoxicated. True, they may do so for a time, but that which undermines will sooner or later destroy. Every time a person is intoxicated, his reflective powers are drowned. Animation may be restored, but if there is any faith to be put in analogy, it must be with a diminution of strength every time the experiment is made. What man, that loves the enjoyment of health and vigour, would every now and then throw himself into a pool, to lie there till every sign of life was gone, merely because it was possible that he might, for a number of times, be saved by the exertions of some humane society? The man, who drinks till his reasoning faculties are quite gone, and gone forever by one overwhelming indulgence, is like one who, in an instant, is deprived of sight by some pow-

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erful calamity. The man who dozes and soaks his mind by moderate, but constantly increasing indulgence, till the power of thinking gradually disappears, is like one who becomes blind by the slow growth of a white speck upon the pupil of his eye, till he is involved in total darkness. Is there much to choose betwixt the fates of the two? They are both blind, irrecoverably blind; and, after such a catastrophe, the difference of time, when compared with their whole existence, is not worth counting on.

5. In the fifth place, intemperance injures the *purity* of the mind. Our thoughts are much affected by the state of our bodies. If the body is habitually sensualized by animal gratification, no pure or elevated thoughts can spring up in the mind that is attached to it. The materials which such a mind has to work upon, are all of the lowest and most worthless description. Its entangled and enfeebled powers labour amidst perpetually increasing accumulations of impure thoughts and imagery, till it is corrupted to the very core, till impurity forms its element and its bane. The heart of a habitually intemperate man is a soil on which nothing but rank and noxious weeds can find nourishment.

6. In the sixth and last place, intemperance destroys the *comprehension* of the mind. We have just seen that inebriety sinks the rational in the animal part of our nature. Every degree of intemperance has a tendency to conduct the mind into those tracts of thought, out of which springs pious or elevated sentiment. Every act of intemperance has, even in a well-regulated mind, much the same effect that the coming out of the tide has on letters traced on the sand by the sea-shore. It obliterates them. They may be retraced, but it will require a fresh effort for that purpose. The more the traces of them may be, and often are effaced forever.

Let us suppose a richly furnished comprehensive mind to fall under the dominion of any sensual appetite, and intemperance of even the lowest degree deserves that name. What are the consequences? Every indulgence spreads a degree of darkness over it. Every indulgence robs it of a part of its stores. During every indulgence something of that refined spirit which imbues and animates these stores, makes its escape. Every indulgence impairs its power of holding what it has of valuable knowledge. Thus its powers are weakened, its light is obscured, and its boundaries narrowed, till, at last, the poor victim of his own lust becomes a feeble, stupid, helpless being; and the mind, once conspicuous for its brilliant powers and high attainments, and the object of warm and merited approbation, is imprisoned in its own impurities, and painful but unavailing regrets, and becomes the object of universal contempt or pity.

Since such are the effects of intemperance on the mind, who that is concerned about his own well-being, or about the well-being of others, would not anxiously inquire by what means so great an evil may be prevented where it may not yet be prevalent, or removed where it may? It exists in our country to a frightful degree. The temptations to it are insidious, numerous and powerful. Its ravages have been extensive and appalling, and it comes to be a question of first-rate importance, whether it is to be removed or guarded against by the observance of MODERATION or of ABSTINENCE. The apostle, in the text, says, 'abstain from fleshly lusts,' and in accordance with this injunction my purpose is, without meaning to assert that, in all states of society and in all circumstances, tasting intoxicating liquors is in itself sinful, to show that, in the *present* state of society, *abstinence* as a cure for intemperance, is much more eligible than moderation.

11. It may be laid down as a principle, to which no rational objection

can be anticipated, that where there is danger on the one hand, and perfect safety on the other, common prudence, in a matter in which there is no moral obligation to take the other side, would dispose us to take the side of safety. If there be no command to indulge on the part of *any*, and if there be great temptation on the part of *many* to indulge occasionally to excess, to stickle for moderation, and to raise the cry of alarm when abstinence is inculcated, indicates, to say the least of it, a stronger desire to gratify appetite, than to cultivate self-command. In such a case, indulgence can be no *duty*, and abstinence can be no *sin*. The man who indulges is not, in so doing, conscientiously submitting to the authority of God; he is *venturing* on an experiment that may have danger associated with it both to himself and others. On the contrary, the man who abstains violates, in so doing, no law, shows no disrespect to divine authority, and maintains his conscience void of offence by taking the only effectual means of securing both himself and others against probable danger. Thus it is apparent, that, in the present state of society, every consideration of prudence and benevolence would urge a man to abstain. Having laid down these general principles, I shall endeavour, in three particulars, to show you that abstinence, in a state of society in which intemperance prevails, is more eligible as a cure for the evil, than moderation.

1. In the first place, it is so, because moderation would produce no marked change in the customs of society as to drinking. Were moderation only adopted as the principle of cure, the danger would not be taken quite out of the way; the appetite would continue to be solicited as usual; in the course of time, the evils connected with indulgence would cease to be talked of; they would slip from the mind, and the prevalence of the vice, to as great an extent as ever, at no remote period, would evince the folly of having attempted to remedy a disease, so insidious and so deadly, by means so utterly inadequate.

Were moderation only adopted as the principle of cure, the baneful potion might still make a part of the entertainment on almost every table. It would be presented as the token of hospitality or kindness in almost every house. It would still be resorted to as the bond of brotherhood—the inspirer of glee in most convivial parties. It would still be sought after as the dispeller of cares, and the cheering confirmer of bargains. Civility would still press the acceptance of a *little*, and civility would still honour the offer by taking a *little*. The praises of the deleterious beverage would still be *sung* in one place; *openly asserted* in another; and in a third, they would still be whispered with many knowing winks, and shrugs, and many sly jokes, all intended to intimate that care must be taken not to go too far, rather from deference to others, who are thus quietly laughed at for being too scrupulous, than from a sense of personal danger, or a benevolent regard to the well-being of others. Thus the minds of multitudes would still be kept in a state of unhallowed excitement from indulgence, or in temptation from perpetual allurements to indulge. What would be the probable consequence of all this? Is it not natural to expect that, in many cases, reason would be drowned, decorum outraged, bad passions roused, impure appetites awakened and stimulated, quarrels fomented, property to an immense amount uselessly, *injuriously* squandered, dangerous habits of dissipation formed, and so, misery in many a shape, scattered in society?

It is dangerous to tamper with temptation. It is extremely dangerous to let a spark of fire touch a train of gunpowder, though at a considerable distance from the magazine with which it is connected. If Eve had wished to be saved from the power of the arch-tempter, her safest plan would have

been to stop her ears, to turn away her eyes from the fascinating fruit, and to depart entirely and with all speed from the scene of her danger. If a man wishes to escape the hazard of being dashed to pieces at the bottom of an ice-covered hill, his best way is not to trifle on the slippery places on its brow.

2. In the second place, abstinence is more eligible as a cure for intemperance than moderation, because the least indulgence is unnecessary: and if evil be, in a high degree, the probable result of an unnecessary indulgence, it is clear that it should be avoided. If ardent spirits be necessary, they must be necessary for some purpose. Now what good purpose do they serve? Are they essential to the protection or improvement of health, to the creation or support of social hilarity, or to the cultivation of talent or sentiment? If they be not essential to one or other of these, they cannot be *very* necessary to our well-being.

Health being supposed to be at present enjoyed, is indulgence in ardent spirits necessary to its continuance? The most skilful medical men say, No. The soberest men, in reference to their own experience, say, No. The healthiest of our race never taste them. Those who use them most freely, and praise them most highly, are often found boasting rather how much they can drink without being the worse for it—that is, I suppose, without altogether unching their rational faculties, or immediately and seriously injuring their health—than how much, next day particularly, their heads are the clearer, their hearts the more peaceful, or their bodily frames the fresher or more vigorous. So, then, it seems the nice problem is, how much may be taken and no *harm* done. Now, what does this amount to? To no more than this: How much fire may I carry in my bosom, and yet not be burned? How far may I venture to tamper with, or undermine, my constitution, without hazarding its speedy or total destruction?

Again, are ardent spirits necessary for promoting social hilarity? Hilarity, at proper seasons, is allowable, it is desirable. 'A merry heart does good like a medicine.' But, to suppose that indulgence in ardent spirits is necessary for this purpose, would be a libel on the *powers of the mind*, on the *powers of education*, on the *very nature of knowledge*, and of the *social affections*.

It would be a libel on the powers of the human mind. Could it be imagined, without at once impiously impeaching the wisdom of the Creator and cruelly degrading his workmanship, that the stores of wit and pleasantry could not be unlocked, that 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul could not be enjoyed,' but by calling in an auxiliary, having a tendency to set on fire 'the course of nature,' and to introduce pain and sorrow, by creating a transitory, an unnatural, and unholy excitement. By the supposition, too, that such aid is required to produce social hilarity, it is in effect declared, that social enjoyment arises more from a stimulating animal gratification, than from being trained to the easy, and vigorous, and active exercise of the powers of reason and imagination; that knowledge, at once the light, and aliment, and strength of the mind, is not of a discursive nature, and calculated by its unrestrained and natural circulation from mind to mind, to generate the highest delight, that it would stagnate unless kept flowing by an extraneous power, and that the interchange of the sentiments of esteem from hearts properly disposed, and overflowing with kindly feelings, cannot impart happiness unless seasoned and quickened with a pungent stimulant, that may excite to frenzy, but has no tendency to infuse composure.

If ardent spirits are necessary to ease and freedom of conversation, it can only be in the case of the selfish, the sullen, and the suspicious. Such per-

sons require to be awakened from their mental apathy, by powerful stimulants—to be drawn out from their lurking-places by a force sufficiently strong to make them forget themselves. But it must be confessed, that the conversation which is prompted by such potent application, in subjects naturally so unproductive, is not likely to be *very* valuable. The gayest and sprightliest portion of society, whose innocence and gracefulness form one of its principal charms to all persons of accomplished minds and correct taste, need no such incentives to conversation or mirth. Health, rectitude of principle, freedom from the annoyances of care, and moderate attainments are, in so far as they are experienced in their case, a perpetual spring of pleasant fancies, buoyant feelings, and communicative delight. The very suspicion that they used intoxicating liquors would be a death-blow to their character, as the reality would undoubtedly be to the greatest and most exquisite part of their happiness. Now, if these persons need them not, it would be hard to say, why they should be needed by those who boast greater knowledge, greater vigour, greater powers of activity, and greater variety of pursuit.

Again, are ardent spirits necessary in the cultivation of talent or sentiment? It does not appear that they are? It is well known that no man can apply his mind to the study of any thing abstruse, of any thing that requires close thought, or accurate or persevering research, when under the influence of spirituous liquors. And as to sentiment, it is best acquired by silent converse with God: and, since this is the case, would it not be daring and impious mockery to attempt to draw from so high and pure a source, the spirit of benevolence and devotion, by means so absurdly irrational as indulgence in drinking ardent spirits. The mind drugged and heated by such stimulants cannot find its way into the presence of the Holy.

If, then, ardent spirits are not necessary for the continuance of health, for promoting social hilarity, or for the improvement of talent or sentiment; it may be asked, what are they good for? I answer, if they are beneficial as medicines, let them be so used, and, as I am not competent to decide any question of that kind, I would leave it entirely to medical men to determine the circumstances, the quantities, and the frequency.

I am aware that this may be considered as carrying matters too far. It may be said, if you would allow us nothing but what is necessary, you would strip life of its adornments, you would put out the light of science, and lay the power of the most ennobling of the arts for ever asleep. Now, far be such a wish from my bosom. Whatever decorates or dignifies the form or the enjoyments of man; whatever gives grace to his movements, or elegance to his appearance; whatever gives acuteness, activity, or comprehension to his mind;—if it bring not, by necessary, (I speak not of contingent, consequence, degradation and ruin in its train, let it flourish! It furnishes useful employment for the human faculties, it lends additional comfort, seemliness, and dignity to human beings, and therefore, in so far as is consistent with the paramount claims of truth and righteousness, it is worthy of all encouragement. But it is very different with that which we are stigmatizing. As a mere indulgence, in the present state of society, it can do nothing but evil, and therefore, as an indulgence, it merits nothing but condemnation and avoidance.

3. In the third place, abstinence is more eligible as a cure for intemperance, than moderation, because it keeps those who practise it more clear of the guilt of those who become intemperate around them. The man who is abstinent from *aroused* principle, raises a testimony against intemperance that cannot be misunderstood, and completely exonerates himself of having

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any share in the guilt that is contracted by the intemperance of his neighbours. Not so, however, the stickler for moderation. Let us suppose two men. The one has power over himself at all times; the other has power over himself only occasionally, and is always in danger of being overtaken. They are taking a friendly glass together. Will the moderate man stop the other in due time? Let us make the most favorable supposition. Perhaps, he may. He may not directly countenance intoxication; no, no, nothing so bad as that. He only awakens and fosters the appetite to a small degree. But all the world knows that it is dangerous to rouse dormant passions or appetites. An appetite accustomed to indulgence, once awakened and fostered, though but to a small degree, will urge its way onward to voracious gratification. Restraint irritates, stimulates it. It will have enough, if it is to be got, sometimes even though visible destruction were immediately to follow. Thus, by a series of indulgences, commencing always with moderate men, the appetite, sometimes partially checked, sometimes disdaining restraint, sometimes leading, sometimes hurrying its infatuated victim, may bring him to ruin. Take a hundred men, and let each be with him a hundred times, and he is ruined among them. Now, is not a part of the guilt of that man's ruin fairly attributable to each person of the hundred and to each indulgence of the hundred? I see not how they can be justified. Among them the poor being has been led blindfold, he did not know where he was going to the brow of an awful precipice. His moderate companions might have known, and ought to have known; and, but for the obtuseness of mind, occasioned by such gratifications, would have known; that he would be in imminent danger. There he is left, for few decent people maintain even a show of friendly attachment to a frail brother of the bottle, when he is evidently losing power over himself. Their honor would be stained by the least visible connexion with him. Will not he that judges righteous judgment bring *them* in at last, guilty, art and part, of this man's destruction.

These moderate men may smile, when thus censured, because they themselves are safe. They may look wise when they hear of the ravages of intemperance, and, knowing that they entertain no criminal designs, they may say, we are sure we are not to blame. But in all fair and even charitable reckoning, they *are* to blame. They draw on to ruin many who know not their danger, and who have not sufficient control over themselves, by their connivance, their countenance, and their example.

If abstinence from ardent spirits be, as has been proved, truly beneficial, the universal establishment of it would, undoubtedly, promote the improvement, the peace, and the happiness of society. This result, however, is not to be expected without a great change in the views and customs of the great body of the people in respect to the use of distilled liquors; nor is that change likely to be affected without the union and co-operation of the abstinent. But decent people, of respectable moral and religious character, who insist upon being allowed moderate indulgence, prevent the desired improvement in two ways: They distract the counsels and operations of the less decided among the abstinent; and their example affords a most convenient shelter for those who feel themselves disposed to linger on the borders of intemperance.

In the spirit of friendship I would call upon them to give the matter a full and serious consideration. It is well worthy of continued and solemn thought; and if they persevere to indulge, though but to what is called a moderate degree, without making it appear that they have the authority of God in their favor, it is not easy to see how they can free themselves from serious blame. A christian looks not only on his own things, but also on

the things of others. He knows that he who suffers sin upon a brother, in Scripture account, hateth him in his heart. If he acknowledge his obligation to lay down his life in certain circumstances for his brethren, he will not certainly grudge a little wholesome self-denial in an endeavour to promote the cause of temperance. Some may, notwithstanding these considerations, throw the subject far from their thoughts, and, in derision, taunt us with a want of common sense; and, in the exercise of superior wisdom, sneer at all such well-meant, but weak attempts as those which have been recommended. Such people must have their own way, but we can discover neither weakness nor enthusiasm in the saying, 'that it would be as safe and as wise to stand in awe and consider.'

In conclusion, let me address a few sentences to those persons who, indulging habits of regular or occasional intemperance, hold what has been said in contempt, and set at defiance every appeal to their hearts and consciences. I would ask these men, Do you believe in a future state of existence? If you do, would you be willing to enter into it directly from a career of intemperance? Do you not feel that by such a course of low and grovelling gratifications, you are degrading *reason*? Do you not feel that you are debasing your affections? Do you not feel that you are destroying all the finer sensibilities of your nature? Do you not perceive that you are making yourselves nuisances in society? Do you not feel that you are insulting the God who made you, who gives you life and all its comforts, and who has declared that he will not be mocked, and that he who sows to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption? Do you not feel that your conduct proclaims your contempt of all that is pure and elevated in sentiment and character? And after all this, can you hope to escape? What must you experience, when your bodily and mental frame have become a wreck? Where shall you find safety or consolation, when a God of spotless holiness and infinite power shall fix himself in awful and unremovable vision before your minds, to fasten upon them the torturing conviction, that for obstinate, and impenitent, and determined sinners like you, there is no hope? Surely no man in his senses would run the risk of this, if an escape might be effected. It may be easy in moments of jollity to laugh away all apprehension. But such laughing, it has long been known, will not materially alter the laws that affect our constitution. Laughing will not chase consumption from a man's lungs, or sickness from his heart, or fever from his blood, or pain from his bones, or madness from his brain. Laughing is no proper or effectual cure for that alarm, and horror, and despair, that are sure, sooner or later, to seize the drunkard's mind. Laughing will not procure even annihilation, the last forlorn hope of the profane and wretched. To laugh, then, at such certain evils as follow a course of intemperance, is mere fatuity or frenzy. Let me beseech you to reflect, ere you resolve to proceed farther in your present course. Heaven is admonishing you to stop; it is inviting you to return to sobriety and peace. Despise not its warnings; disregard not its authority; trample not on its proffered mercy. 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation; to-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.'

Little time has been left for saying any thing of those associations that have it for their object to suppress intemperance, nor is it necessary here to say much. After mature deliberation, at the commencement of which there was any thing rather than a wish on my part to find them justifiable, I came to the conclusion, that in principle they are scriptural and rational in a high degree. They employ the principles of voluntary engagement, of peaceful and benevolent co-operation, and publicity of proceeding, in a way that cannot justly be found fault with, and that is well calculated, by the blessing of God, to promote the end which they have in view. The advantages to be expected from these societies are numerous and highly important. I shall simply mention some of them. They turn the eye of the public strongly and steadily on the evils of intemperance. They present to the public a decided and standing testimony in favor of sobriety; a testimony that, I

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am persuaded, will, if the members are faithful, gather strength with time. To the young and wavering they afford a refuge from temptation, and form a school in which habits of decided temperance may be advantageously learned. They MAY, perhaps, be the means of arresting the downward career of some infatuated and almost lost men, and of restoring them to the comforts and privileges of sober and virtuous society. They may, by directing public opinion more extensively and forcibly against intemperance, add force to most of the other means that may be adopted for mitigating or removing the evil. And, lastly, by diminishing the number of temptations to vicious indulgence, and of the hitherto crowded haunts of dissipation, they MAY open a way for improvements in knowledge, morality, and even religion, beyond what we can at present conceive.

If, notwithstanding these claims of Temperance Associations to the countenance and support of christians, there be any who, from either appetite or interest, make opposition to them, I would call on them to consider the twentieth verse of the ninth chapter of Isaiah's prophecies; 'He shall SNATCH on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left, and not be satisfied; they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm.' This language is strikingly applicable to all who unduly seek the gratification of their passions or appetites, as a means of securing comfort or happiness. They never fail to draw misery on themselves. The passage may be thus paraphrased; 'When any community gains a subsistence, or seeks support, in any degree, by the vices of any of its members. in so far, it eats the flesh of its own arm; when any individual aims at gaining a subsistence, or amassing wealth by any sinful practice, or, disregarding reason and piety, is determined to live in the indulgence of sensual appetite, he is guilty of eating the flesh of his own arm.'

In the preceding discourse it has been shown that intemperance, in course of time, destroys the clearness, the pliancy, the peacefulness, the deliberativeness, and the comprehension of the mind. Nothing now remains, but to call on those, who are anxious to promote the best interests of their fellow-men, to lend their countenance and aid to the associations mentioned. There are some who are doing all in their power to stop the progress of intemperance. It cannot add much to the credit of those who are called by the name of Him, who laid down his life for his people, to neutralize their efforts by regarding such institutions, if not with positive enmity, at least with cold suspicion. The evil that we deplore, ought, undoubtedly, to meet with universal discountenance, and reprobation. Let fathers, then, for the sake of their children,--let masters, for the sake of their workmen and servants,--let ministers, for the sake of their people,--let women, for the sake of their families,--let youths, for their own sake,--and let the whole christian community, for the honour of the pure gospel which they profess to believe,--let all these come forward to support, not only these associations, but ALL RATIONAL and SCRIPTURAL MEASURES, for the suppression of intemperance, that stepping in between the living and the dead, it may please God, that, by their humble instrumentality, the PLAGUE be stayed.

Consider what has been said with all seriousness, as in the sight of Him before whose judgment-seat you must at last stand, and let every one act faithfully as consciences shall direct.

CONSTITUTION OF THE MONTREAL YOUNG MENS'
TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

"We, whose names are subscribed, do voluntarily agree to abstain entirely from the use of ardent spirits, except for medicinal purposes, and, although the moderate use of other liquors is not excluded, yet, at the promotion of Temperance in every form is the specific design of the Society, it is understood that excess in these necessarily excludes from membership."

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